

MISCELLANEOUS NOTES

1. DOGS *CANIS FAMILIARIS* HUNTING THE INDIAN PORCUPINE *HYSTRIX INDICA* IN THE WILD AT JODHPUR, RAJASTHAN

Old World porcupines are the most spectacular rodents and are the most easily recognisable. Their bodies and tails are covered with stiff spines and quills of varying length, and with tough and flexible bristles. Various members of the family are widely distributed over parts of Europe, most of Africa, and Southeast Asia. They live in a wide range of habitats like deserts, grasslands, open scrub, Dry Deciduous and Deciduous Forests, and near crop fields.

In India, the Indian porcupine *Hystrix indica* is distributed from the Himalaya to Cape Comorin (now Kanya Kumari) in Tamil Nadu (Prater 1980). In Rajasthan, it is found in the Aravalli Hills and to their southeast. The present observations were made around Jodhpur city (26° 18' N, 73° 01' E), situated on the eastern fringe of the Great Thar Desert. The rocky habitat used by porcupines in and around Jodhpur city, includes open scrub forest, fields, farms and orchards. During a regular trek towards Bhuteshwar Forest block outside the city walls for the census of the Hanuman langur (*Semnopithecus entellus*) on June 7, 2001 at 0615 hrs, I saw a pack of seven dogs *Canis familiaris* chasing a porcupine near Bharun Temple. The porcupine looked weak and injured. A few drops of fresh blood were also seen on the rocks nearby. The porcupine was moving slowly with erect spines. All seven dogs surrounded it

at 2 to 3 m distance and barked. The dogs attacked the porcupine from different sides, snapping at the forelegs about 4-5 times. They also bit at the throat of the porcupine and knocked it down. After 20-25 minutes the porcupine's spines collapsed. Suddenly, one dog jumped on the porcupine's throat from the front, stood opposite the porcupine's body and tried to overturn it. Then, two more dogs joined it and they all held the porcupine tightly till it died.

In general, porcupines are reported to be quite fearless of large predators like panthers and tigers (Prater 1980). Dogs successfully preyed on a porcupine in this, perhaps, unusual case. In the last few years, dogs are emerging as potential predators on wild animals like chinkara *Gazella bennettii*, blackbuck *Antelope cervicapra*, and langurs in and around Jodhpur city. A study conducted in the Aravalli Hills suggests that *Canis familiaris* is a potential predator of Hanuman langur at Kumbhalgarh Wildlife Sanctuary (Chhangani 2000).

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REFERENCES

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- PRATER, S.H. (1980): The Book of Indian Animals. 3rd Edn, Reprint with corrections. Bombay Natural History Society, Bombay. xxiv + 324 pp.

2. SIGHTING OF THE INDIAN WILD ASS *EQUUS ONAGER* IN RAJASTHAN: A NORTHWARD RANGE EXTENSION

(With one text-figure and one plate)

On the hot afternoon of September 24, 2001 while surveying birds in the Rann near Bhawatra,

Jalore district, Rajasthan, I noticed tracks of the Indian wild ass *Equus onager*, but did not see